

Briefing

Improving safety for millions of tourists through an EU Directive

The current situation

The tourism industry is very important for Europe, contributing substantially to member states' economies. EU citizens and tourists coming from abroad have a right to expect a high and consistent level of protection in their accommodation when travelling within the European Union. Guaranteeing this level of protection is of utmost importance for this sector to remain successful and internationally competitive.

However, fire safety legislation across EU member states is inconsistent.

- The current non-binding 1986 Council Recommendation 86/666/EC on fire safety in existing hotels creates no binding legal obligations for hotel owners/operators in member states to ensure the fire safety of their premises.
- The hotel industry-led Management Building Systems (MBS) Methodology provides a pragmatic, result-oriented starting point, but has proven to be difficult to implement by the hotel industry alone.
 - It requires significant expertise in risk assessment.
 - It was not written in line with the standards creation rules.
 - Only a limited number of stakeholders were consulted.
 - References to existing EN standards are missing.
- There is a significant lack of accurate European-wide fire data and reporting by member states. Such data is essential to understand the current level of fire risk facing international tourists and EU citizens alike.

NOTE: Based on Eurostat data from 2011 (EU incl. EFTA), there are 202'853 establishments (hotels and similar accommodations) with 6'270'543 rooms providing 12'756'340 bed places.

The cost of a major incident with loss of life and damage to property and image is incalculable. Nevertheless, some argue against new fire safety requirements, in particular for financial reasons. This can be mitigated by the mandatory installation and maintenance of a fire safety system, complemented by adequate staff training, which have the potential to greatly improve fire safety with very little economic investment required.

A way forward

Euralarm urges European policy-makers to adopt an EU-level Directive on fire safety in tourism facilities, including hotels, complemented by formal necessary standards developed through CEN and CENELEC. Not adopting strong measures would constitute a missed opportunity to put an end to what in many cases are preventable deaths, injuries and costly damage to property.

About Euralarm

Euralarm represents the European electronic fire and security industry at European and worldwide levels, providing technical and market expertise for policy making and standardization work in the field of security and fire safety. Our main fields of activity are: Fire detection and alarms, intrusion detection and alarm systems, access control, video surveillance, alarm transmission and alarm receiving center. Founded in 1970 Euralarm represents over 2500 companies having a total turnover of approximately 16.4 Billion Euro, 70% of the total European Fire Safety & Security market. Our members include national associations in 17 countries as well as individual companies.

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